

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #464-5

with

Ruth Ishibashi Yamaguchi (RY)

August 3, 1992

Pearl City, O`ahu

BY: Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto (MK)

MK: This is an interview with Mrs. Ruth Ishibashi Yamaguchi at her home in Pearl City, O`ahu, on August 3, 1992. The interviewer is Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto.

Okay, Mrs. Yamaguchi, we're gonna continue the interview, and you were at the point where you were telling me about the situation at 4561 Farmers Road. I think you had mentioned that you had moved into the house, had gotten some furniture and your sister Gladys moved in with the family.

RY: Yes.

MK: And what was your dad doing at that time?

RY: For a while, I remember he kept the same arrangement, because he was still working as a stevedore. So in order to get to the farm earlier, and to get back and get some rest and go to work, he kept the arrangement, knowing that my sister had moved back with us.

MK: And that meant that he was still living at his friend's place.

RY: At his friend's place in the tenement apartment, somewhere on Fort Street.

MK: And then, for yourself, that was 1943, you were sixteen years old, what happened to you?

RY: So, well, I think I mentioned that I was working part-time to stay with this family, taking care of these two boys, and going to school. And then the landlady of that court [*where this family lived*] mentioned that I could get a better job with the exchange system [*Hawaiian Army Exchange*] and there were openings now and they were hiring. But then, I thought about it and mentioned it to my family, my mom told me that I would have to give [*Ruth Yamaguchi's employer*] at least some notice, for her to get some help for herself. So I did. [*Ruth Yamaguchi's employer*] was very upset, but then she found someone to live in with her and to help take care of the children and

her home. So I went to go apply for the job, thinking that I would get a part-time job and still be able to go to school. But when I got there, they told me that it was a full-time job, and they really wanted people to work full time. But then, I just didn't have time to think about it, or talk to my parents about it, what I should do. So I just made up my mind, all right, I'll be able to help them and I took the full-time job. And that's how I started my career with the exchange.

MK: And, you know, did your parents really need your help financially at that time?

RY: They did not stress anything how bad they were, or how financially tied they were, because the farm and having to rent the house. But from every indication, I thought that they must be having—they must be struggling. So I decided that I will help them out.

MK: What made you think that, you know, they were having a hard time?

RY: Well because I knew my father had that Farm Security [*Administration*] loan, and he had to make payments for that land. And knowing that even though we evacuated the farm, his farm was still there. He was still commuting, taking care of the livestock. Yet now, I knew he had rented that home on Farmers Road. I don't know how much the rent was at that time, but knowing that he had two different places to make payments, I really thought that they must be struggling, and plus my brother's medical bills. 'Cause in those days, I don't think anybody had any health insurance, so I knew he would have to pay the doctors and the hospital bills. So I just thought that it might be better to just go ahead and take the full-time job and help them out.

MK: And so, even though your family was evacuated, your dad was still making payments on the loan for the land?

RY: I took it that he was making payments, mm hm. Because I do know that it was under Farm Security [*Administration*], and I had heard them talk about that they had taken out a loan. And I knew he couldn't depend on the rental on the Twenty-first Avenue [*home*], because he was trying to make it pay for itself. And I knew he wasn't getting the money directly from that. He would be making the payments for that property.

MK: And how did you feel about, you know, working full-time and, in essence, stopping your schooling?

RY: I remember I had real mixed emotions about it, but after seeing Mom sick and how depressed she got, and knowing that I just couldn't concentrate on school. I found it real difficult to concentrate on school knowing the condition Mom was. And fortunately the boys were too young, and they were carefree. So I was happy that they weren't burdened with what went on too much. Of course, they knew, because they had to give up so much, too, of their childhood.

MK: And then, you know, like right now you said giving up parts of their childhood —can you kind of explain that?

RY: Well, like, I remember while staying with the Kawanos, they would ask for their toys, which we weren't able to get for them. My dad could not get the toys out of the house. And when they cried, you know, like why the cold bath, why they had to do so many things outside. Why they always had to wait to eat. Why was Mom busy with only the baby? And I felt that they had given up some of their childhood.

MK: And then I know that in 1944 your dad was told that he would have to leave his Pu`uloa land.

RY: Yeah.

MK: Tell me about that.

RY: In---well, he came home and said that he was trying to make arrangements to move the farm. And I wondered why, why would he want to move their farm when that farm was his. But then I found out that they were told they must evacuate permanently, off the land. And in those days, you just don't fight the government, especially if you're Japanese. You're so afraid. I thought that was real strange. If it's your land, why do you have to get off your land. But I'm sure the farmers, when they got the notice, they must have all went through the same feeling, why do we have to get off our own land?

I questioned my father about it, and I heard Mom ask him, "Why?" you know, "That's our farm."

But he said that they had notice from the government, they are gonna condemn the land. And in those days, you didn't understand what it meant when they condemned your land. How can they do that, you know? But there's nobody to fight for you, to stand for you. And I'm sure most of the farmers didn't have nowhere to go and ask why. My dad said all he knows is he has to move. So he was now busy coming home and making arrangements, and I know he was making a lot of trips, in and out. And I found out that he was negotiating to lease the land in Koko Head, which is now Hawai`i Kai. But not in the area where the lagoon is, it was on the opposite side, where Kamehameha School[s] had some land. And they were to lease the land from Kamehameha School[s]. And he was negotiating that, and when it was time to move, when he finally was able to lease the land, I think there were other farmers who was renting that land there, and now he was busy with the task of moving his livestock from the other end of the island to another end. And traffic in those days, most of it was occupied by military vehicles.

MK: How was he able to, you know, transport his livestock? You know, he had

animals and how did he manage?

RY: Well, he still had his truck, and I think he had friends who also had trucks, and they were able to help. But I don't think they were able to do that kind of move in one day. It's not a matter of a day that we're talking about. I remember, he was kept busy for maybe a week. And everybody's busy with their farming, or with their work. You cannot just do the moving because you're just gonna move in a day or so. I remember he had friends helping, and it took days. 'Cause on the weekends, I remember, he would take some of my brothers, I guess, to probably help, just to watch the animals or something, or just to watch the gate. And they would go and help Dad. I remember it took days for them to do the moving. And if it was just gonna be on weekends, I would think it ran for several weekends to move.

MK: Would you know about the other Pu`uloa farmers? Were they in the same situation of having to leave their land and relocate?

RY: Oh yes. I understand all of them got the notice the same time, and they're to vacate the same time. I guess they must put a limit as to when the deadline was. But I'm sure most of them did not wait and they started to move out. Some, I found out, they had moved earlier, when they got evacuated anyway, and they had moved out earlier. But people like my dad and several others stayed until they got that notice.

MK: Did some of the Pu`uloa farmers relocate to the same area as your dad?

RY: I can't remember the same farmers being there. I know of another friend, but not of the same group. There were different farmers, but I don't know for sure if the other farmers from Pu`uloa moved. Because I've heard some of them moved somewhere else. Some of them who had chicken farms had moved somewhere else. But I think the Kamehameha [*Schools*] farmlands were leased out mostly to pig farmers, 'cause my dad mentioned certain people and they all had piggeries.

MK: And then, I know that, by then, the farm was moved to Koko Head side, and how about your house? You were living at Farmers Road at that time.

RY: We were still there. We were still there until---I remember, it was toward the end of 1944, and my dad got notice from the naval officer that he was being transferred out. And so Dad made sure that he wasn't going to rent the house to anybody now, because we needed it. So when the officer moved out, we were able to move into the house. I would say, probably at the very end or---I would---I thought it was the beginning of 1945, that we were able to move into that house on Twenty-first Avenue.

MK: And then, how long did you folks stay at that house?

RY: Oh, we stayed there until, way into the fifties.

MK: And then, at that point, I think you mentioned something about your dad having to move his farm and home again?

RY: Well, I remember now, when we---sometime in '45, he was able to rent the farmlands, I would say it's in `O`ili Road. `O`ili Road and Farmers Road ran into each other, I think, in those days. And I remember a friend of his had some farmland where they could move his piggery to that land. So he rented it out, and it was somewhere in `O`ili Road, probably at the end of Farmers Road. He was able to move the farm. So now he was able to commute from Twenty-first Avenue, only few minutes down to `O`ili Road. And by then, Mom was pretty well, she was getting healthier. And I think every now and then, she went to help Dad at that time. But then, Kent was still home until he started kindergarten. And my grandma was still there, so she was able to care more for Kenny too. 'Cause amazingly, Mom recovered and Kenny, although he was still small and sickly, he recovered, you know, which was amazing.

MK: So your family moved to the `O`ili Road area?

RY: Oh, the farm.

MK: The farm . . .

RY: The farm.

MK: . . . was moved there. And your family home was still at . . .

RY: We were now living in 721—no, was it 708—708 Twenty-first Avenue, yeah. So then, my dad was there too. So we started to have a normal household. That was in '45. He had bought more secondhand furnitures, and so the home got furnished at least. And he never did mention anything about losing all those furnitures and everything. In fact, he never brought those things up. He just went and bought secondhand furnitures and started to furnish the house slowly.

MK: And then, after the war, did the family leave that Twenty-first Avenue home and live elsewhere?

RY: No. In '45, when the war ended, we're still there, and Helen got married, so she had moved out. Then after Gladys got married, my dad decided to sell that home, because they were gonna move to a lease land at Koko Head that would be `Ehukai Street. It was right across from Sandy Beach, and a lot of the farmers had moved into that area. And so they built a house, which I remember was—which I remember never got painted. He painted the inside, it was real nice. It was a large house, but he never got to paint the outside. And I found out, oh, all of the homes were that way. It was painted nicely in the inside, but not on the outside. But then, there were lots of farmers from Pu`uloa area that got in there. I can't remember all of them but I remember the chicken farm was the Yamadas from Pu`uloa, and they lived across from

my family.

And each of the boys, in the meantime, started to go in the service. They volunteered. Richard was the first, then Irwin. Then that left two boys living at Koko Head. But eventually Tommy volunteered for the air force, then Kenny was the last one left. He was still attending University of Hawai'i, and he graduated in—I can't remember the year, but I remember he won a scholarship at one of the art institutes in New York. So he left on the scholarship and lived in New York. By then, Vietnam War was in full force, and Kent decided to volunteer. And I remember him writing to me that he had volunteered thinking that he would go to the front in Vietnam, but he ended up with an intelligence group. (Chuckles) Never got to Vietnam. And I think he stayed with the intelligence group all the while, until his time was up.

MK: And all this time your dad was farming at `Ehukai?

RY: He was farming there. And he was still there when Kent came home. Now, Kent, after---oh, he was gonna get discharged from the army, and he had met this girl who was also working in the intelligence group. And he got married to Louise and they came home. And as I remember, he got discharged at Schofield [*Barracks*], I think. 'Cause I remember, I went to pick them up there. He came home and stayed with my parents for a while, until they moved out. Then for a while, there was no one at home until---oh, Grandma got sick. I think this was before Kent left for New York, 'cause he used to help my mother take care of her. But then Mom's health wasn't very good, after Kent left for New York, and she wasn't able to take care of Mom—Grandma. So my dad was forced to put her in a nursing home. And she passed away at 101 years old. But I remember---he said (when) she was 100 years old, the Japanese Consulate [*General*] honored her for being the oldest living female immigrant that year. I think either she was 100 or she had just made 101. She was honored. She had passed away, I think, before her 102-year-old birthday, Grandma passed away.

MK: And then, I know that you mentioned something about your father continued farming, and after that, he quit farming.

RY: By then, I think, Bishop [*Estate*], the lease was gonna be up, and all the farmers now had to move out again. 'Cause I think the lease was not gonna be renewed. And so, all of them had to find a place and move out. And by then, I guess my dad must have thought that it's time for him to give it up, because after setting up the farm, I remember they were stricken by—I think the farmers, the pig farmers, were stricken one year by cholera. And a lot of 'em had taken a loss. I remember they had to hire vets to inoculate all of their livestock. And it's one of those things, I guess, when you have your own farming, that you go through. But by then, my dad, before that, had met his friend, Alec Napier [*Alexander J. Napier, Jr.*], who was the head of Kahua Ranch. And so my dad took a job with him and ran the farm, with my mother's help, on part-time. Mom was well enough to help him. He took a job

with Kahua Ranch, and he was still able to do the farming, with Mom's help. But when the lease thing came up, where they were not able to renew the lease, at least he was able to give it up and had a job with Kahua Ranch?

MK: What kind of work was he doing at Kahua Ranch?

RY: He was doing mostly salesman's job, I think. Calling on different places and he would also help---he used to, I remember going to the slaughterhouse. He mentioned that he had gone to Honouliuli slaughterhouse with his boss. And in those days, I guess, you would do almost all kind of job. 'Cause sometimes I remember he mentioned that he would help in the cold storage. So I imagine it was all around job. I remember him saying that he used to go to different markets.

MK: And he retired in what year?

RY: He retired in, I think, in late seventies or early eighties. And he had officially retired, but they retained him, probably just as part-time, just twice a week or so.

MK: He worked a long time.

RY: So at the time that he was working for Kahu_ and he had to give up their farm, one of my brothers had come home, so he decided to buy a home in K_ne`ohe, and that's still his home there, in K_ne`ohe.

MK: And for yourself, you had married in '49, and you had started your own family.

RY: Right. When I had my son, I quit work. Then I had my daughter. Then in early fifties, I think it was in 1953, we were able to buy this home. My husband [*Harry Yamaguchi*] was working at Pearl Harbor [*Naval Shipyard*], and we were able to buy this home, and my sister-in-law, who lived next door, was not able to go out to work, so she said she'll babysit my daughter. My son was in school. So we made arrangements that she would baby-sit and I went back to work for the exchange system again.

MK: And you retired in what year?

RY: I retired in '87.

MK: You know, I think earlier we talked about what you had said or not said to people you knew about your World War II experience. After the war, how much did you talk about, what had happened to your family?

RY: After the war, only a very few people knew. It was mostly my supervisors and strangely enough, all of my supervisors were Caucasian people. But they were one of the nicest people I have ever met. And all of my supervisors

encouraged me to take different courses, where the exchange started to offer different classes. And in fact, recently, my son wanted to get some old photos. And I kept this big large box full of different photos, although I had separated some of their childhood things, and I had started this family album. He wanted to go through that, so he had gone through it. And one day he came, he said, "Mom, look what I found."

I said, "What is it?" And it was a card certifying that I had attended an eight-week course at the University of Hawai'i. For eight weeks, each class---twice a week, for hour and a half, and I had completed that course. So it was---and I thought about it, I said, "Oh, yeah," you know, I had gone to those classes. And it was strange that he would find that card.

He said, "When did you go, Mom?"

I said, "Oh, that was through the exchange, we were enrolled in several different classes." And I remember the exchange had sent to us a Dale Carnegie course. So I was really grateful to all of my supervisors.

MK: So when you working for the exchange, what type of work were you doing?

RY: I started off with sales clerking. Then when I had---in the meantime, before I went on maternity leave, I had worked myself up as a manager of the exchange at [Fort] DeRussy. And I remember the officer who was in charge was a Major Cobb. He was a gruff man. His looks even told you how gruff he was, and everybody would be so frightened of him. But he was an officer when he found out that I would not be coming back after maternity leave, his secretary called me to be at one of the meetings—I'm pregnant, now, I would say about eight months—to be there at the meeting. And I wanted to know what is it about? I was told, "Just be there, [and] if you can't come, he's gonna send a car."

I said, "No, I'll be there."

And when I got there, I was awarded an army citation. He had arranged for that award. And I said, "Oh, my goodness." Me with my big tummy, you know, eight months pregnant. It was real strange. And another friend of mine, Frances Tsuruda, also got an award. He [Major Cobb] said he would hold the job open for me, but my husband was against it. So I had to tell him that, no, I won't be able to come back for a while.

So I received through the mail a letter of recommendation, that I can come back to the exchange anytime I wanted to.

MK: So when . . .

RY: And I was surprised that he had even sent me the letter. So with my experience with the military ousting us, and yet I got employment with the military, and there were so many benefits given to me through them. Like I

say, all of 'em were Caucasians, and they were really, really nice. And so while attending, I mean, while working, I had gone to a lot of the evening classes that was available, either through the exchange, or through the department of education.

MK: And then as the years went by and you returned to work, what positions did you hold?

RY: Then I went back as a salesclerk now, because my husband was against being called evenings or having to stay longer hours, and as management, you would have to do that. And he was against that, and he protested so I said, "All right, I'll just take a salesclerk's job, where I put in eight hours and come home, and forget about it." So that was fine.

Then later, this buyer that I knew, a Mr. Kodama—oh! He had left the exchange to manage a corporation downtown, and he asked me to come and work for him. So I thought, well, it might be a good opportunity, and the pay was better. So I had left the exchange and went to work for the corporation. But unfortunately, within three years, Mr. Kodama died of cancer at an early age, I think he was in his late thirties. And he passed away. And the corporation was taken over by several different people. They were all nice, but the last one had come from the Mainland, and things were not the same any more. And so I decided to quit, and in the meantime, one of my good friends said, "Oh, come back to the exchange. There is an opening at the depot."

Now, the depot means it was a complex of several warehouses, and it was the central receiving and shipping department for the exchange. And she said, "It might be different, so why don't you take it."

So I went back again to the exchange, and Mr. Yoshida, Jack Yoshida, was nice enough to take me on. So I started in as a clerk-steno and administration clerk, and just stayed in the office after that. And I retired as an operation clerk.

MK: And then, all through those years, when, you know, you would get together with your coworkers or friends, did you ever talk about your wartime experiences and what had happened during those years?

RY: Later on, to my supervisors, I found it easier that I could talk to them, but I didn't elaborate anything, you know. They were surprised that the government had done such a thing. But then several times when I mentioned it, lot of people just didn't pay attention to you. Oh, no such thing went on. They were more aware of people being interned on the Mainland. Then a lot of stories came out, they were interned in the Sand Island, or at Honouliuli. The only ones that really was aware of, or listened to you, was people who had relatives whose family got interned. And strangely, my friend who called me to come back to the exchange, her father was interned, but he had died way before that [*redress*] law [*Civil Liberties Act of 1988*] got signed by

President [*Ronald*] Reagan [*in August, 1988*]. And I felt real bad for her, that her father did not qualify.

MK: And, you know, your mom and dad, did they talk about what had happened during the war years, you know?

RY: That's the part, my parents if they talked anything, they must have talked among themselves, because in the later years, they never brought anything up. They didn't sound bitter about it, nor did they discuss anything, and if I remembered anything and I brought it up—we're able to now laugh about it. So I knew my mom had recovered from it, but she would never, not once did she ever brought up how hard it was or how much she had suffered. She only brought the whole thing up in referring to Kent. How much Miyoko had helped her, and without Miyoko she probably would not have survived. It was only on those terms she would bring it up, but not the day we left there, not the day that she got the bad news, or how much we had lost. She never brought that up. She just brought up only Kent and Miyoko, the Kawanos helping.

MK: And I think you once mentioned that you noticed that in terms of your mom's behavior, your mom was still different after the war than in her prewar days.

RY: Mom, I noticed, was, as the years went by, in the, after war and maybe in the fifties, it wasn't anything, but I noticed somewhere around in the seventies, as she grew older, she got to be very insecure. I remember when I used to visit her in Kaneohe, she would love it when I would say, "Oh, come on Mom, let's go down to Longs [*Drugs*]," or, "Let's go to Times [*Supermarket*]."

And she says, "Oh yes, I need new slippers." Or, oh yes, she wants to see what they have. So she would go with me. And she used to enjoy that, going to Longs or going to Star Market.

And when the shopping mall came up in Kaneohe - "Oh, I'm gonna go to Sears. Mom, you want to go?"

"Oh yes."

But then, as the years went by, I noticed, no, she would make excuses. "No, no, no. I don't have anything to get."

I said, "Why Mom? You used to even, to look around."

I noticed she was starting to change, made every excuse. She didn't even want to go to Times [*Super*]market, which she used to love to do, because she would look for different *tsukemono* or different things that she didn't eat for long time. But she won't, she was no longer interested. And in the eighties, I noticed it even got worse where if my dad did not come home at the time that he said he would come home, she was busy calling everybody, "Is Dad there?" Or, "I wonder what's wrong, he's not home yet." And you

could see, you could---from her tone of her voice and how worried she was. And she was getting to be real insecure. It got to a point that she was constantly calling people, "Dad's not home. I wonder if something happened."

And it . . .

MK: So you were mentioning that your mom, in her later years, did not feel comfortable out too much.

RY: She hardly left the house. She would make all kind of excuses not to go with you. Even how much you coax her, that you came to pick her up, let's go. But then I noticed that if Dad was to go with us—there were some occasion we decide all right now, we're gonna have to tell her we're gonna go out to lunch. And if Dad was there, she would go. So we decided that, okay, we take turns every now and then for the girls to pick them up, take them out to lunch, take her out. I noticed that if Dad was there, she was willing to go. But there was another side to it, if we stayed out a little bit too long, she would start making excuses to go home. We used to talk Dad into coming out, bringing her out. Few minutes later, "Oh, we have to go, we have to go." So it was, she was always in a hurry to get home.

I wonder if that was coming with her getting on with her years, getting older, or whether it had something to do with the evacuation we went through, 'cause she was never like that. And there were times that I would bring something up, she does not want to hear about it. If you had anything to do with wartime, she did not want to hear about it.

MK: What about your dad? How has he reacted to conversations about the war period?

RY: He more or less adjusted I guess. Because at one family gathering it was real strange. On the news, this demonstration, all the different colleges was having all kind of demonstration at the height of the Vietnam War. And that newsreel came on and there were several grandchildren, especially grandsons around. And out of the clear blue sky, I remember him—I was there when he brought up the subject that, oh, Grandpa had four sons who all volunteered for the service, "I hope none of my grandsons would go and demonstrate against the government like that."

And I thought that was real strange that he would bring it up and my son was there, my sister's two boys, and my brother's son. And I thought he referred to it more for the boys, although the demonstration going on had, were all coeds. But I thought that was real strange. But right at that moment, I thought to myself, oh, no matter what the military did to us, Dad did not hold anything against the U.S. government, when he came out with that. And I thought to myself, oh, my dad, all these years been very loyal to America, regardless of what they did. And I remember one time he did tell me that, he

said, no matter what they did, he felt very fortunate they did not do anything to Grandma. She was an alien in the family, yet he felt very fortunate that they did not do anything to Grandma, because he heard of all these different stories, no matter how old they were, they were taken away and interned. And I thought to myself that he was really grateful they did not do anything to Grandma.

MK: And then, recently, with the possibility of farmers like your family, of getting redress, how has he reacted to this?

RY: That's another difficult part that I can't understand. When he heard about it, when I called him, "Dad, did you read the paper, did you hear the news?"

And he said he did. And one day, he came over, "What is this all about?"

And I told him that I had contacted JACL [*Japanese American Citizens League*] and talked to Bill Kaneko [*attorney and JACL officer*], that we may qualify. And I thought when I talked to Bill Kaneko, I made the phone call only on behalf of my dad, thinking that he would qualify. And Bill Kaneko says, "When did your mom die?"

I said, "My mom died in [*October*] '88."

And he said, "Your mom qualifies." [*Although deceased Ruth Yamaguchi's mother qualified for redress because her death occurred months after the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 was enacted.*] And he says, "Anybody else in the family may qualify."

For a while, he was, he thought that was really something, that the government may have to pay us. But as each time I questioned him, his attitude changed. He didn't want to talk about it, he didn't remember, or when I bring certain things up, he seemed to ignore me. I told my sister, "He seems to be ignoring me, or he just wants to block things out." Each time I was filling in his forms and things, it got to be more difficult to work on this redress.

My dad won't say---and he would answer, "No, no." And when I look at him, his eyes are full of tears.

So I told my family, I'm having a difficult time with him. That either he's blocking it out, or his emotions are so mixed, that he's not going to say one way or the other. In 1940, I remember when he went to the Japanese consulate to cut off his dual citizenship, I remember he said, no, he's an American citizen, "I do not want to be a citizen of Japan. I was born an American." I remember him saying that's why he did it.

So now it's real hard to say which, what he's thinking on this whole thing.

MK: How about your own thought about the World War II experience and the

situation now with redress?

RY: Sometimes I feel I can understand my father's part. But when our evacuation took place, I did not know at that time that it was mostly based on us being Japanese. But I do remember the officers questioning whether we were Japanese, whether Grandma was alien. And after that, everything got to be Japanese. In those days, nobody fought the government, nobody's gonna question or stand against the government. No matter even if you're Japanese, if you're born American Japanese, you're very loyal to America. I thought (about) my father, when he cut off his citizenship, saying that he's an American citizen. And yet I thought about people like my grandma, where, during the war, they were persons without a country. She did not belong to America, she did not belong to Japan. And I thought about that, and I could not help but feel so sorry for people like my grandma. Whether they went with Japan, it was wrong, whether they went with America, it was wrong for them. It must have been emotionally hard for them. And yet when I think about our situation, there were nobody to stand up for us. You didn't dare fight the government, you did what you were told. The only one in my family was my grandma, you know, saying that "*America-jin de den demo e*" ("As Americans, you needn't get out"). That only she should get out.

But in those days, you all had to get out if the government told you. It was not a case of standing up for your rights. And that's the difference I see now, from that time against now, where people stand up for their rights, even if they have to fight their government. And there are groups that will fight for you or stand up for you, but in those days there was nobody for us. In fact, like I told Bill Kaneko, people who were interned, everybody knew about them. But it seemed as though we were part of American history that happened, and yet unknown or forgotten. But to bring it up fifty years later, it hasn't been easy, because I guess for people my age, we really remember a lot of things. There's part of our childhood that we lost. And so it gets to be very difficult, so I can imagine for my dad how difficult it is every time I bring something up. And I find it real strange—and I even told my sisters, "I find it real strange that anything that happened before the evacuation, he seems to remember."

Like I missed Grandma's portion where she's telling me Grandpa worked for the dairy. But my father is saying, "Oh, she's probably meaning that she worked, they worked for Judge [*Antonio*] Perry who had owned the dairy land there." And his father was a caretaker for them, for Judge Perry's family. And they lived on his property. So he said, "In a way, Grandma is right, and in a way, it's not quite so that he had worked for Hind-Clarke Dairy. He had worked for Judge Perry, who had owned the dairy farm before Hind-Clarke Dairy took over."

I said, "Oh. But in a way, Grandma meant it that way and I misunderstood her."

So I got that part straightened out. And he said, yeah, they lived on Judge

Perry's property. My older sister was born on that property. And when Grandpa Ishibashi built the home that we lived in, that we remember, he said, by then, he says, the Hind-Clarke Dairy had taken it over, bought it from Judge Perry, and Hind-Clarke Dairy, the owners, told my dad, "Since you're gonna work for us, we'll buy the home, and you stay rent-free."

As I remember, anybody who worked for Hind-Clarke Dairy, lived on their homestead, you did not pay rent. That was part of the benefits you got, that you stayed rent-free. So he could remember a lot of things. He remembered a lot of things that happened before we moved. And we were surprised, even to this day, he had remembered lot of things. He corrected me. And yet, when I question him about anything that happened after we got evacuated, a lot of things, even if he remembers, he won't tell me about it. He won't tell me about it. And it seemed as though he either blocks it out, or he finds the easiest way out, "No, I don't remember."

I noticed that I don't remember---got to be very common whenever I asked certain questions. Or either he blocks it out and says, "No, I don't know."

So it must be something---that period of time is very painful. And either he doesn't want to remember, or he doesn't want to talk about it. Every now and then, if I bring something up, he would say yes or no. But especially where, when I tell him things about Mom's part, where I remember, he just won't answer anymore, and I see tears in his eyes. So it's very painful for him, so I just drop it.

MK: I'm thankful that you've remembered and you're willing, talking about it.

RY: And so my sisters told me that—my sister Gladys was the one who says, "I think it's best not to bring it up anymore, 'cause he's not gonna remember, even if he knows, he's not gonna tell you. You're just gonna have to depend on your memory, and probably you remember the most anyway, whereas he's already blocked it out, his memory."

MK: I think I'm gonna stop the interview right here.

RY: Yeah, all right.

MK: Thank you.

END OF INTERVIEW